

THE FLORIDA SENATE
2016 SUMMARY OF LEGISLATION PASSED
Committee on Judiciary

HB 43 — Churches or Religious Organizations

by Reps. Plakon, Cortes, B., and others (SB 110 by Senators Bean, Gaetz, and Hutson)

This bill has been referred to as the “Pastor Protection Act.” It provides that certain individuals and entities may not be required to solemnize a marriage or provide marriage-related goods, services, or accommodations if doing so would violate their sincerely held religious beliefs. The protected individuals and entities include:

- A church;
- A religious organization;
- A religious corporation or association;
- A religious fraternal benefit society;
- A religious school or educational institution;
- An integrated auxiliary of a church;
- An individual employed by a church or religious organization while acting in the scope of that employment;
- A clergy member; or
- A minister.

A refusal by any listed individual or entity to solemnize a marriage or provide marriage-related services, goods, or accommodations may not serve as the basis for a civil cause of action. Additionally, the refusal may not serve as the basis for the state or its political subdivisions to impose penalties or withhold any benefits or privileges, including tax exemptions or governmental contracts, grants, or licenses.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect July 1, 2016.

Vote: Senate 23-15; House 82-37